

clusion of a section on “similar species” for each account. Although the 152-by-228 mm (6-by-9-inch) format makes the work larger than a typical pocket field guide, the book’s production and binding appear to be first rate.

*Raptors of the World: a field guide* is far and away the closest thing to a perfect world guide for birds of prey available, and should be on the shelf and in the backpack of raptor aficionados everywhere. I will be taking my copy into the field for years to come. I highly recommend this innovative and useful guide to anyone interested in identifying and learning more about birds of prey.—KEITH L. BILDSTEIN, Acopian Center for Conservation Learning, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary, 4120 Summer Valley Road, Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania; e-mail: Bildstein@hawkmnt.org

THE BIRDS OF SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE WITH ANNOBON ISLANDS OF THE GULF OF GUINEA. BOU Checklist No. 22. By Peter Jones and Alan Tye. British Ornithologists’ Union/British Ornithologists’ Club, Oxford, United Kingdom. 2006: 172 pp., 34 plates, 8 maps. ISBN: 0-907446-27-2. Price £30 (cloth).—This latest volume in a steadily lengthening line of worthy checklists produced by the British Ornithologists’ Union focuses on a chain of small, remote and until recently almost forgotten volcanic islands that straddle the equator off of the coast of Western Africa in the Gulf of Guinea namely Príncipe, São Tomé, and Annobon. Discovering and rediscovering the avian secrets of these islands has been the objective of a number of intermittent and variously successful ornithological expeditions since 1800 and, indeed, only recently have several supposedly ‘lost’ species come to light. The high number of endemic species relative to land mass on these islands has attracted the attention of collectors, taxonomists, and more recently visiting birdwatchers.

The islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, in particular, have become easily accessible with regular connecting international flights and are now firmly on the birding map for tourists and birders eager to add some fascinating and rare endemic species to their world lists. Thus, this book is a useful tool for any prospective vis-

itor. Oddities to be found include the once almost mythical São Tomé Grosbeak (*Neospiza concolor*), a unique forest dwelling Fiscal (*Lanius newtoni*), the strange Dohrn’s Thrush Babbler (*Horizorhinus dohrni*) for which a tag of *incertae sedis* is certainly well applied, the world’s largest Sunbird (*Dreptes thomensis*), the Weaver (*Ploceus grandis*), and the Dwarf Olive Ibis (*Bostrychia bocagei*).

The authors were responsible for an ICBP study report published in 1988 of the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe based on a five weeks visit to the islands. This personal experience has been combined with a thorough review of the scientific literature available. A concise and readable introduction outlines the geography, history, geology, and climate. Trends in breeding, migration, and the origins of the avifauna are discussed, and a brief summary of the other endemic fauna and flora is given. The nomenclature follows *Birds of Africa*, while the taxonomy used tends to follow a middle road, being influenced by Naurois, Collar and Stuart, Sibley and Monroe, and Dowsett and Dowsett-Lemaire. The authors recognise 28 endemics, 6 solely on Príncipe, 15 on São Tomé and 2 on Annobon. Four others occur on both Príncipe and São Tomé with another one shared by all three islands. There is a summary checklist, extensive gazetteer, and bibliography. A selection of pleasing color photographs illustrate the habitats of the three islands.

Most of the book is taken up with species accounts and historical records for the islands are summarised up to 1997. Alternative Portuguese and Spanish names are listed followed by referenced summaries on distribution, abundance, status, migrations, habitat, behaviour, breeding, and threats. The list errs on the side of caution regarding sight records and most of those not substantiated by their presence in collections demand the need “for confirmation” from the authors. Thus, the list provides a solid basis that will surely be the essential reference for future records but also allows much scope for new discoveries particularly concerning migrants and the seabird population where there is obviously still much to be learned. One of the strangest omissions is that regarding the section on vocalisations; it seems exceedingly odd that no reference is given in either the text or bibliography to the

set of recordings of West African birds compiled by Claude Chappuis, which admirably include the vocalisations of most of the species to be encountered on the islands. By listening to these recordings one would immediately realise that the São Tomé Fiscal is certainly not "rather silent" for its cries can be loud and constant thus drawing attention to its presence. During a recent 'Birdquest' trip to São Tomé we could hear three separate individuals calling at the same time from different directions; their far-reaching calls must help in setting up territories in the steep, forested valleys. My own personal observations can also confirm that Lemon Doves (*Columba larvata*) on São Tomé definitely are found feeding on the roads along with Laughing Doves (*Streptopelia senegalensis*) and that white phase Western Reef Egrets (*Egretta gularis*) are certainly not absent on Príncipe.

The taxonomic position of many species of the islands is perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the book and although some species are discussed, regrettably others such as Lemon Dove, Blue-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon malimbica*), Gulf of Guinea Thrush (*Turdus olivaceofuscus*), and Chestnut-winged Starling (*Onychognathus fulgidus*) have been ignored completely. One quibble with the choice of English names involves *Ploceus velatus* that the authors choose to call Vitelline Masked Weaver. This name is more appropriately given to the form *vitellinus* usually treated as a separate species. Either African or Southern Masked Weaver as used in *Birds of Africa* would have been more apt. On an aesthetic level, I wonder why the book could not have included some color plates depicting the endemic species and it is a pity the main picture of Dohrn's Thrush Babbler on the cover shows the bird in a totally uncharacteristic pose! My review copy had the first 50 pages damaged by deep creases, so prospective Internet or postal buyers beware! These minor issues aside, this is undoubtedly a well-researched investigation into the state of the current understanding of the avifauna of the island and will obviously act as an important benchmark for the decades to come.—NIK BORROW, London, United Kingdom; e-mail: n.borrow@btinternet.com

THE BIRDS OF ANGOLA. BOU Checklist No. 18. By W. R. J. Dean. British Ornithologist's Union, Tring, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. 2000: 433 pp., 10 tables, 9 figures, 33 plates, 9 distribution maps. ISBN: 0-907446-22-1. GBP 50.00 (cloth)—The *Birds of Angola* is part of the new series of BOU Checklists and follows the format of the previous titles living up to the high standard of proof reading we expect from the BOU. Angola remains poorly known and it must have been difficult to collate the data scattered in obscure collections and museums. The author summarizes all collections and expeditions to date, noting that since the start of the civil war in 1974 all studies stopped. Not a single Angolan bird has been studied in depth in country, making an atlas impossible as so little is known of the distribution. Data on breeding birds were minimal at the time of publication and it is only since 2005 that a few ornithologists have again been visiting the country. Knowledge of the status and distribution of most of the almost unknown 10 endemics, which are briefly detailed in the book, is now at last increasing.

The introductory chapters detail the geomorphology and geology, climate, vegetation zones and zoogeography, and migration and breeding with a section on conservation which is again receiving some attention after Angola's years of chaos. The vegetation zones are well described with a summary of characteristic species, including such enticing Afro-montane relicts as Angola Cave-Chat (*Xenocopsychus lyalli*) and Swierstra's Francolin (*Francolinus swierstrai*). The Cabinda enclave has a large component of Guinea Forest species, many of which also occur in the north of Angola proper in Cuanza Norte and Cuanza Sul. The interior plateau has huge tracts of *Brachystegia* (miombo) woodland, while the Escarpment Zone has some of the least known endemics including Pulitzer's Longbill (*Macrosphenus pulitzeri*) and Red-crested Turaco (*Tauraco erythrolophus*).

It would have been nice to have some plates of the endemic birds, but all we get is a painting of the Red-crested Turaco on the front cover. There are 33 color plates of habitats, some of which seem to largely duplicate each other, perhaps not the wisest marketing ploy.

The taxonomic sequence, taxonomy, and